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February 3, 2004

Dear Prospective Offerors:

Subject: Questions Received in Response to Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN) No. CAN-03-LTP-01 entitled, "Leading Educators to Applications, Research and NASA-related Educational Resources in Science (LEARNERS) II."

Enclosed for your information are some questions NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) has received in response to the issued LEARNERS CAN. As more questions are received they will also be released and posted to the NASA Acquisition Internet Service.

Some of the questions I have received from potential offerors have requested GSFC's advanced consideration of ideas and/or proposal strategies for submission. Please note that the Government is not able to provide comments as such would be an unfair competitive advantage to all interested offerors.

Question No. 1: On page 17 of the CAN, under Body of Proposal, the following are listed: Project Purpose, Innovation, Diffusion Potential, Project Feasibility, Partnerships. Product is NOT listed here; is this where it should appear in the proposal? On page 21, 10.3 Criteria for Merit Grading "Education Products" is given 10% in the grading.

Response to Question No. 1: Under 6.2.3 entitled "Specific Elements of Proposed Objective," specifically III. all six objectives specified allow an offeror to discuss the product(s) being proposed. The evaluation criteria specified in Section 10.3 "Criteria for Merit Grading," is not intended to strictly be a "one-for-one" correlation; hence the addition of the Government's evaluation of the offeror's products that are poised for the widest possible market diffusion that use innovative methods or emerging technologies, and that clearly address educational standards utilizing NASA data.

Question No. 2: If we only develop a prototype and focus on research, would that be acceptable?

Response to Question No. 2: As stated in Section 6.2.4 entitled "Prototypes," of the CAN, rapidly changing technologies require rapid prototyping and development of products. To address the extremely short time-to-market for information technology products, proposals submitted under LEARNERS II will

consider products for which prototypes are available or product development or substantial enhancements to existing products. Further stated is that particular interest will be in products that serve a sustainable paradigm, which is they can readily evolve additional features and increased functionality. The proposal must describe how the proposed product or prototype would be modified to meet the LEARNERS objective. As stated in 2.2 of the CAN, LEARNERS is intended to provide tools for the learning community and is not intended to conduct information technology research and development.

Question No. 3: Total funding for this CAN is \$750,000 per year to be divided among the cooperative agreement recipients. There is also the possibility of an additional \$50,000.00 to be available for the second performance year? Also, the CAN states that there is \$750,000 available for the first year, to be divided between the recipients of agreements, with \$50,000 available for the second year. Do you typically award < 10 agreements, with budgets between \$75k to \$500k, or > 10 agreements with budgets < \$75k. This makes a difference in the scope of what we would propose. Also, is the \$50k available for year 2 a total for all participants, or for each?

Response to Question No. 3: In Section 6.1 entitled “General Proposal Guidelines,” the last paragraph, the CAN details the total funding available of \$750,000 per year to be divided among the cooperative agreement recipients. Additionally, \$50,000 may be available per recipient for a second year performance.

A critical consideration for NASA in the selection of proposals for funding will be to maximize scientific return within the available budget. To achieve this objective, NASA will weigh the proposed costs of proposals deemed meritorious against the available funding; final selection will reflect an appropriate balance. Each solicitation nets different results and NASA cannot presume to guess the expected number of awards to recipients resulting from this CAN.

Question No. 4: Can we submit a proposal even though we did not submit a letter of intent?

Response to Question No. 4: A Letter of Intent (LOI) to submit a proposal in response to this Cooperative Agreement Notice is not required but desired. LOI’s are to be submitted electronically by entering the requested information through the SYS-EYFUS Web site located at: <http://proposals.hq.nasa.gov/proposal.cfm>. Respondents without access to the Web or who experience difficulty in using this site may contact the Help Desk at proposals@hq.nasa.gov (or call 202.479.9376) for assistance. It is recognized that the CAN states that a LOI is required, therefore under G.1.1. where it is stated that a LOI is required all offerors are advised that the first sentence is changed to “A Letter of Intent (LOI) to submit a proposal in response to this Cooperative Agreement Notice is not necessarily required but desired by the Government.” Additionally, under 6.1 entitled,

“General Proposal Instructions,” the sentence “In order to plan for a timely and efficient peer review process, a Letter of Intent to Propose is required to be submitted” is modified that the LOI “...is requested to be submitted.” In other words, a LOI is not required to propose.

Question No. 5: Are there any restrictions barring a NASA employee serving as a PI?

Response to Question No. 5: A principal investigator is the individual named as the project leader. Any resultant cooperative agreement will specify the name of the principal investigator (or project leader) because the award will be based on that particular individual's research effort and management capabilities.

However, in responding to this question, I want to ensure that all offerors understand this research opportunity is a cooperative agreement and not a grant. NASA and the Recipient under CAN-03-LTP-01 will share in providing the resources necessary to complete the effort. It is important the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook be reviewed by offerors for complete explanation to the term “recipient.” Additionally, your attention is directed to NASA’s Grants and Cooperative Agreement Handbook that defines and describes organizational collaborations.

Question No. 6: How can a commercial entity become involved with one of the potential participating Universities under this research agreement?.

Response to Question No. 6: Commercial entities may submit proposals as principal offerors with University partners, or they may subcontract to a University which is submitting as principal offeror. NASA is not in a position to broker potential partnerships at this time.

Question No. 7: Can we involve partners in Greece and Australia?

Response to Question No. 7: The question does not specify whether the partnership makes the foreign entity the cooperative agreement recipient. It is NASA policy that, in general, research with foreign organizations will not be conducted through grants or cooperative agreements, but instead will be accomplished on a no-exchange-of-funds basis. However, if selected as the best available source, a Cooperative Agreement award may be made to a foreign firm. Once you have defined the relationship of partners, please refer to the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook which can be accessed at <http://genesis.gsfc.nasa.gov/grants/grants.htm#GrantsForms> for further clarification.

Question No. 8: Can we list potential partners or only those who have already agreed to participate (the latter being my assumption)? What information about partners or Co-PI's is necessary? Contact person and all contact info, the name of the institution only, or anything in between?

Response to Question No. 8: See Section 6.2.3.V. for discussion of how the Government requests offerors to address partnerships and Section 10.8 for how the Government will evaluate partnerships.

Should additional questions be received the Government will continue to post the questions and responses to all interested offerors.

Your continued interest in NASA GSFC's LEARNERS requirement is appreciated.

Cordially,

Lynne C. Hoppel
Agreement Officer